



This is an official
DHEC Health Advisory

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**Hepatitis B Outbreak in North Charleston, SC
Associated with a Spinal Care Clinic**

Summary

On May 16, 2013, DHEC became aware of three cases of acute hepatitis B with a common history of receiving injections at the Tri-County Spinal Care Center on Dorchester Road in North Charleston on February 7, 2013 and February 21, 2013. DHEC identified other patients who had received injections at this clinic on those days, and informed them of their risk of hepatitis B. During those contacts, another case of hepatitis B was discovered.

After a thorough investigation and review of infection control procedures and injection practices at the clinic, several lapses were found in safe techniques and practices. Since it appears that the clinic's injection practices have not changed since they began offering injections in September 2011, DHEC cannot be certain that patients who received injections since September 2011 were not exposed to a blood-borne pathogen.

Therefore, DHEC is advising that all patients who have received a spinal, joint, or other type of injection, including IV fluids, at the Tri-County Spinal Care Center on Dorchester Road in North Charleston be tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV.

Guidance for Clinicians

Index of Suspicion for Hepatitis B

- Clinicians are asked to consider hepatitis B in their differential diagnosis in patients who present with malaise, nausea, fatigue, jaundice, or abnormal liver function.
- DHEC recommends that you ask about a history of injection (epidural, facet, joint, or IV medications) at the Tri-County Spinal Care Clinic in North Charleston. Only the location on Dorchester Road is affected.
- If the history obtained is compatible with exposure, laboratory testing for hepatitis B, as well as hepatitis C and HIV is recommended.
- **Notify DHEC regarding any patient with a history of exposure to the Tri-County Spinal Care Clinic on Dorchester Road in North Charleston for whom bloodborne pathogen testing is obtained. Contact the Low Country Public Health Region at 843-953-0055 and leave the following information:**
 - **Patient name, patient phone number, tests ordered, date of test, physician name, and physician phone number.**

Laboratory Testing

Testing may be performed by your reference lab or specimens may be sent to the DHEC Bureau of Labs. DHEC will charge for this service.

The following are guidelines for sample collection of specimens to be processed by the DHEC Bureau of Laboratories:

1. Use Bureau of Laboratories sample submission form (DHEC-1332). This form is available from your local health department.
2. Be sure to include the outbreak tracking number on each form (13-100).
3. Hep B Screen: Order test number 223 (Hepatitis B Diagnostic Profile)
4. Hep C Screen: Order test number 224 (Hepatitis C Antibody (HCV)); the test will reflex to confirmation if the screen is positive.
5. HIV Screen: Order test number 230 (HIV-1/HIV-2); the test will reflex to confirmation if the screen is positive.
6. Collect a minimum of 2 Serum Separator Tubes or 2 Red Top Tubes from each patient.
7. Tubes must be spun down within 4 hours of collection. Serum must be transferred off of red blood cells within 4 hours of collection if using Red Top Tubes.
8. Samples should be kept refrigerated and shipped on cold packs.
9. Samples must be received by the DHEC Bureau of Laboratories within 24 hours of collection if confirmation testing is expected to be necessary.
10. Samples scheduled to arrive at the lab on Friday, must be received by the lab on Friday morning.
11. For questions about specimen collection or submission, please call the DHEC Bureau of Labs at 803-896-0800.

Reporting of Cases

- All cases of acute hepatitis B are urgently reportable to DHEC within 24 hours.
- All cases of hepatitis C and all chronic hepatitis B cases are reportable to DHEC within three days.
- Cases can be reported at the numbers listed below.

Resources for Additional Information

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm>

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of **hepatitis B** is consistent with South Carolina law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20). The DHEC 2013 List of Reportable Conditions is available at:

<http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/reportables.htm>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2013

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

LOW COUNTRY PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 953-0047
Fax: (843) 953-0051
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper
219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 441-1091
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: (843) 441-1091

Allendale, Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg
PO Box 1126
1550 Carolina Avenue
Orangeburg, SC 29116
Phone: (803) 268-5833
Fax: (803) 533-7134
Nights / Weekends: (803) 535-9265

MIDLANDS PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland
2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-554-9915

Chester, Kershaw, Lancaster, York
PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29720
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886

Aiken, Barnwell, Edgefield, Saluda
222 Beaufort Street, NE
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (803)645-8167

PEE DEE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion
145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 601-7051

Clarendon, Lee, Sumter
PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 775-9941
Nights/Weekends: (803) 458-1847

Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg
1931 Industrial Park Road
Conway, SC 29526-5482
Phone: (843) 915-8804
Fax: (843) 365-0085
Nights/Weekends: (843) 340-4754

UPSTATE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Anderson, Oconee
220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 260-4358
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick
1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: 1-888-218-5475
Fax: (864) 942-3690
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

Greenville, Pickens
PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (864) 809-3825

UPSTATE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION (continued)

Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union
PO Box 4217
151 E. Wood Street
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217
Phone: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (864) 809-3825

**DHEC Bureau of Disease Control
Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology**
1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902



www.scdhec.gov

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.